

**2004N-0115 - Prescription Drug Importation; Public Meeting**

**FDA Comment Number : EC50**

**Submitter : Mrs. Sandra Frear**

**Date & Time: 05/27/2004 02:05:44**

**Organization : Mrs. Sandra Frear**

**Individual Consumer**

**Category :**

**Issue Areas/Comments**

**GENERAL**

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As a lupus patient while it is understandable that some people want lower drug costs, importation isn't the answer.

First and foremost, importation of foreign medications is illegal. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) can't regulate this process and is unable to approve such medications. Regardless of the appearance of the prescription, the FDA has no way of verifying the quality of the product. Patient's prescriptions can run the risk of being contaminated, outdated, mislabeled or may contain the incorrect dosage of the active ingredient. In addition, consumers who purchase medicines from foreign-based websites and so-called pharmacies must sign a waiver relieving the organization selling the medication of any and all legal responsibility. If the organization can't verify its own product, doesn't this signal a red flag that these medications are likely to be risky?

These dangers far outweigh the monetary advantages some may find with imported drugs. We need to consider other safer available solutions, instead of opting for the quick fix of importation.

There are Patient Assistance Programs to provide free medication to those who apply and qualify. In 2003 alone, 6.2 million patients received free or discounted prescriptions through these programs, averaging a wholesale value of \$2.5 billion.

Many patients take prescriptions to treat serious medical conditions such as lupus, Alzheimer's, cancer and diabetes. If these patients were to receive the wrong medicine, it could mean the difference between life and death. This is simply not a risk we should be willing to take.